

Death of the Undertaker

when the undertaker
dies
who will replace
the undertaker --
someone who needs
the business
perhaps

-- William C. Dell

Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Dog Doc

Dog Doc was a mastiff of a man,
Big, gruff, rough, rough, tough
And scary and gentle as a mom.
He could get in a station wagon
With a wounded police dog or
Sick snarling doberman and
Calm it with the tone of his talk
And the extension of his hands
In the fashion of statued saints.
He never wore the thick leather
Armor of city veterinarians,
Not Dog Doc, he was a healer.
His hands were scarred with
Stigmata, though. He would
Stare at the scars and shake
His great mastiff head.
"It's them little sneaky ones
That fool you," he would say,
"Layin' all quiet and twitchin'
Away one minute and snappin'
And snarlin' the next." Dog Doc
Had many beagles of his own,
Was known to know the forests,
Had beautiful daughters.
Dog Doc put puppies to sleep.
"It has to be, Sonny," he would say,
And because he said it
You knew it was true.
"It has to be, Sonny,"
He would always say.
But he never said
Why.